



THOMAS L. GARTHWAITE, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

FRED LEAF
Chief Operating Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
313 N. Figueroa, Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 240-8101

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Gloria Molina
First District

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Second District

Zev Yaroslavsky
Third District


Don Knabe
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District

December 6, 2004

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

 Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **OCEAN BLUEPRINT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

On October 19, 2004, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Knabe instructing the Directors of the Departments of Public Works, Health Services, and Beaches and Harbors to each review the final report, "An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century" and provide to the Board by November 23, 2004, a summary of the final report and the potential impacts of the proposed policy on the County of Los Angeles. Each of the departments is providing a report.

Departmental staff has reviewed the report, "An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century," prepared by the United States Commission on Ocean Policy. Attached is a summary of the 500 page report regarding public health issues.

We find that the report may potentially affect the County's beach water quality monitoring program. However, the Commission has generally avoided making recommendations specific to the state and local government level. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the extent of potential impact upon the County.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

JEF:rw
412:001

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director of Public Works
Director of Beaches and Harbors

OCEAN BLUEPRINT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Summary

By the passing of the Oceans Act of 2000, Congress called for the establishment of a U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy to establish findings and develop recommendations for a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy. Pursuant to that Act, the President appointed 16 Commission members to establish recommendations for a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy. The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy found that the oceans and surrounding waters in our nation are in trouble and major changes are needed in the ways they are being managed. The Commission makes recommendations, directed to Congress, to protect the coasts, oceans, and surrounding surface water in the United States.

Potential Impact to the County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services

Los Angeles County borders some of the most visited beaches in the United States. The Department of Health Services, Recreational Health Program, is currently monitoring ocean water quality for California State required bacteria levels at beaches that are identified by AB 411 as either visited by more than 50,000 persons annually or that are adjacent to a storm drain that flows in the summer. The present required time for ocean monitoring is from April 1 through October 31. When the levels of microbiological contaminants exceed the State mandated levels, conspicuous warning signs must be posted informing the public of the nature of the problem and the possibility of potential risk to public health.

The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy makes recommendations that may potentially affect the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program. This Program establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant, for point and non-point sources, that may be present in a water body while meeting water quality standards. States must list waters that continue to exceed water quality standards even after application of required levels of pollution control technology. States must then develop a TMDL for each pollutant of concern and implement plans to achieve and maintain the established level by allocating reduction among all sources. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency must review and approve state lists and TMDLs. These additional monitored pollutants may have to be included in the testing process with our present monitoring activity.

It is uncertain what pollutants will be monitored, but the additional requirement will require potential additional testing equipment and personnel as well as other signage warning of potential public health risks. We may be able to be compensated by the State for this additional ocean monitoring. The Commission has generally avoided making recommendations for state and local government levels but it is clearly understood that they will play increasing roles in the establishment of a collaborative effort to attempt to bring an end to the decay of our surrounding oceans and surface waters.